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Songs of a City

Howard K. Sutherland

UC-NRLF



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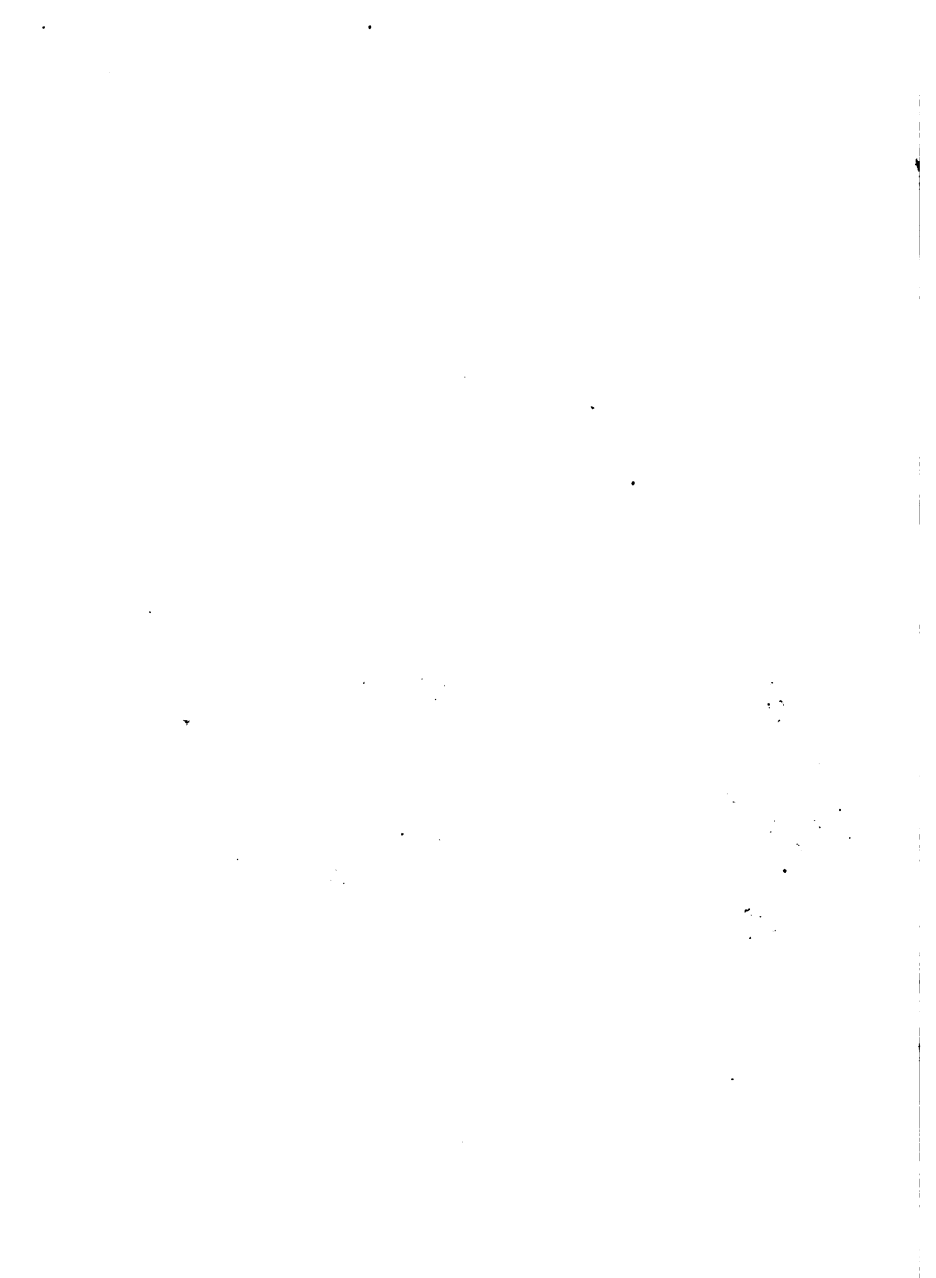
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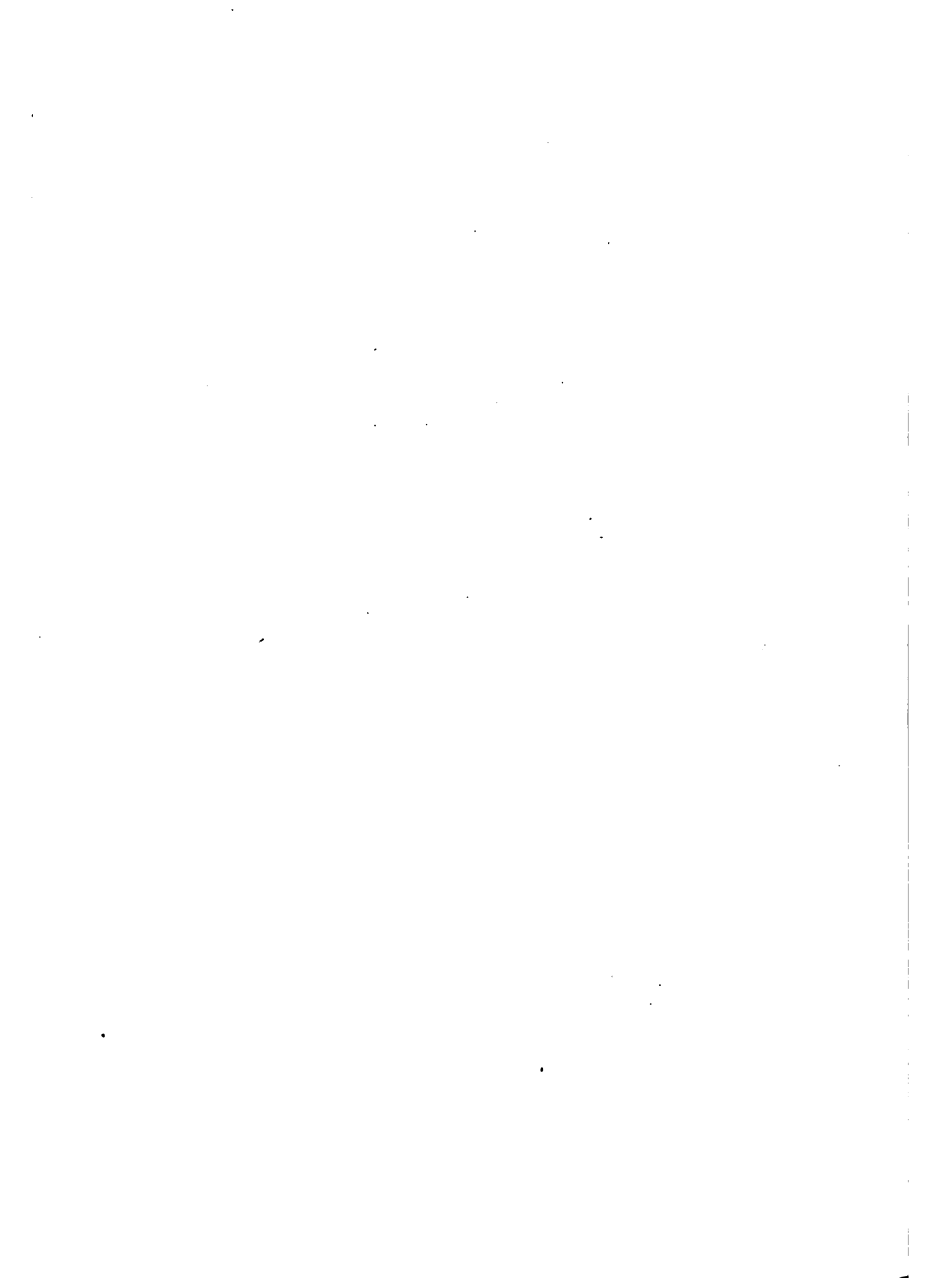


Songs of a City

By the Same Author

Cloth, 75c

JACINTA, AN IDYLL, AND OTHER VERSES
BIGGS'S BAR AND OTHER KLONDYKE BALLADS



Songs of a City

By

HOWARD V. SUTHERLAND



SAN FRANCISCO

THE STAR PRESS—JAMES H. BARRY.

1904

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TO
JOHN WHITE
IN MEMORY OF
THE FICKLE-STARRED NINETIES

1971

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SONGS OF A CITY.

THE MISSING FOOTSTEP.

The crowd is gay on Market street
Parading up and down;
One hears the hum, the tread of feet—
The music of the town.

The shops are all ablaze with light,
So, too, the women's eyes;
The cable cars illumine the night
Like monstrous fire-flies.

I stand alone beneath a lamp
And smoke my cigarette;
I miss a footstep in that tramp
Which I can ne'er forget.

SONGS OF A CITY.

A GRAY DAY.

The sky has donned its robe of gray,
The rain is pouring down;
Few ships are moving on the Bay,
Few people in the town.

Along the streets the cable cars
Creep by at solemn pace;
The tracks are bright, like livid scars
Across the city's face.

Anon a ray of sunshine tries
Between the clouds to dart;
The awful grayness leaves the skies
But bides within my heart.

SONGS OF A CITY.

DOING THE LINE.

I like to watch the people stroll
From Powell street to Pine,
On Market and on Kearny streets—
The San Francisco line.

The women wear the latest styles,
They could not fairer be;
And with what art they oft display
Their dainty lingerie!

Their eyes are dark, their eyes are grey,
Their eyes are deepest blue;
Their eyes are bright enough, alas,
To torture me, or you.

And, oh! they use those eyes of theirs
As only women can;
They know full well the way to break
The heartstrings of a man.

No city in the world can boast
Fair women such as these;
Who is not captured by their charms
Is, truly, hard to please.

SONGS OF A CITY.

For me, to see them is to feel
That life is truly good;
And he must surely be a bear
Who loves not womanhood.

SONGS OF A CITY.

PEACEFULNESS.

A golden glory lights the west—
The sun's farewell;
One chime sounds clearer than the rest—
The daytime's knell.

The eastern skies are crimsoned now
And edged with grey;
The beams from Tamalpais' brow
Have passed away.

On Alcatraz the light is lit,
The Bay is still;
And soon the truant mists will flit
O'er dell and hill.

So still the town this Sabbath night,
So calm the air,
One almost sees the angels light
Those stars up there!

SONGS OF A CITY.

AT NIGHT.

The streets are deserted, the city is still,
Its hours of rest have begun;
The fog from the ocean is heavy and chill—
A clock strikes the hour of one.

A peanut man pushes his truck to the Coast,
A hack wakes a neighboring street;
A desolate dog, with a sniff of a ghost,
Comes hungrily up to my feet.

A couple of Chinamen pass me in file,
And presently, into the light,
A castaway comes with her lip-weary smile
And a heart that is cold as the night.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE TAVERN ON THE FRONT.

Down on the water-front, empty, forsaken,
Stands an old tavern, dust-covered and
grey;

Daily and nightly its timbers are shaken
By the rough breezes that sport on the
bay.

Barred are its windows with meaningless
shutters,

Locked is the portal that never knew key;
Filled are the halls with the ominous mut-
ters

Of winds that, imprisoned, make moan for
the sea.

Many long years the old tavern has carried
The sign that is sad and too common: "To
Let";

Few people saw it, and none of them tarried,
None of them viewed the old inn with
regret.

Brave were the man who attempted to run
it;

SONGS OF A CITY.

Loafers will pass it nor give it a glance;
Even the venturesome little ones shun it,
Policemen and wharf-rats will eye it
askance.

Yet it is said that in days long departed
Came to this tavern, from countries afar,
Men that were mighty of limb, lion-hearted—
Men who had braved tribulation and war.
Some of them came seeking fabulous treasure;
Some of them came seeking freedom or rest.
We of to-day may not venture to measure
The hopes of the men who first came to the West.

Here came the miners and squandered their wages,
Bought the red wine with a ruddier gold;
Wrote in red letters the earliest pages
Of doings long famous and ever re-told.
Till the young sun with its golden-tipped finger

SONGS OF A CITY.

Woke the great mountains with bosoms
dew-pearled,
Here in the tavern the heroes would linger
Telling the tales that awakened a world.

Once the rooms echoed the sound of men's
laughter,
Heard, as they drank, the clear clink of the
glass;
Heard the brave singing that followed right
after—

Songs of the home, or the mine, or the lass.
Now the strong singers are silent and sleep-
ing,
Drear are the chambers they sang in, and
cold;
Death and forgetfulness have in their keep-
ing
Those who once drank in the days that are
old.

Empty the house is, rat-ridden and rotten,
Only the sunbeams caress its poor face;

SONGS OF A CITY.

There it is standing, despised and forgotten,
Left far behind in the city's mad race.
Only at night-time, when slumbers the city,
When the white mist covers hillside and
street,
Come the old spirits who love it and pity
The place that once shook 'neath the tread
of their feet.

SONGS OF A CITY.

RICHARD REALF.

(An Elegy.)

Singer, who now art most silent, I stand by
thy grave and I proffer
Pansies and golden-hued poppies, symbols of
thought and of glory;
Gifts from the bosom that hides thee from
sight of the cynical scoffer,
Paying no heed to the sobbing that runs
through each poet's sad story.

Sing as it pleases the poet, his sorrow is
often his wages—
Enters the joy and the sunlight too seldom
the soul of his being;
Wanders the eye of the many across the
most sacred of pages,
Little avails the great message he gains by
his own clearer seeing.

SONGS OF A CITY.

Yet there are ears that will hearken, and
eyes that are moistened while reading
Hints of a life that is dawning, as shown by
the spirit's vain striving;
Theirs are the thanks worth the having; for
these to his teachings give heeding,
Gaining therefrom the power to laugh at the
world's vain conniving.

Sad was thy life and most sombre, and soft
was the tone of thy singing,
Suiting thy turbulent spirit and luring it into
forgetting;
Winds unto thee, and sweet flowers, gave
promise of future lives, bringing
Chances for love and for glory, and rest from
the soul's ceaseless fretting.

Vainly the fires assailed thee; for into thy
heart's depths descended
Love for earth's suffering children—the love
that unhappiness mellows;
Bound thee to God, the Creator, and most
indissolubly blended
Spirit of thine, ever scourged, with spirits
long scourged of thy fellows.

SONGS OF A CITY.

Thine now the blessing of silence—Death its
compassionate bringer.

We, who are weary, still love thee, and so
thou art paid for thy sorrow.

Safe in the hearts of the watchers abides
every sure-noted singer,

Binding with bonds everlasting the past and
the shadowy morrow.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE COMING OF THE TIDE.

Wait ye a while. Or soon or late
Shall roll towards the Golden Gate
A greater sea of men to bless
Our fields that mourn their idleness.

SONGS OF A CITY.

BRET HARTE.

He wrote, and lo! the overwearied world
Looked up, looked West, to where above
each hill
The mist's white flag lay solemnly unfurled.
He wrote, and lo! the world is looking still.

SONGS OF A CITY.

BACHELOR LYRICS.

1.

The fog outside is thick to-night,
The street looks dark and drear;
My little room is snug and light
But, oh, she is not here.

I lean against the window pane
And hear the cable's whir;
The wind is wooing me in vain,
I only think of her.

The skull upon my table grins;
Did he, too, love in vain?
Yet gladly would I bear his sins
Could he but bear my pain.

SONGS OF A CITY.

2.

My fire is brightly gleaming;
I kneel beside my chair,
And let my thoughts go dreaming
To find my loved one there.

My fire is slowly sinking,
The flames begin to die;
And I—still kneeling, thinking—
Can hear the poor wind sigh.

My fire has turned to embers,
The cheerful flames are flown;
My heart the dream remembers,
But, oh, I wake alone!

SONGS OF A CITY.

3.

Within my room at shadow-tide
My dear love often lingers;
She lays my pipe and pen aside
With, oh, such dainty fingers.

I watch the lights within her eyes,
I stroke her fragrant tresses;
She gently soothes my weary sighs
With kisses and caresses.

Yes, she is mine; and yet I feel
So lonely, oh, so lonely;
Away each moment she must steal—
She's mine in fancy only.

SONGS OF A CITY.

4.

I am sitting alone in my chamber to-night,
With a pen and a book and a frail cigar-
ette,
And a heart for a friend that has never been
light,
And a brain for a foe that will never for-
get.
I suppose there are many just doing the
same—
Whispering softly one musical name.

There are hundreds of fellows just sitting
like this,
With a pen, or a book, or a pipe in their
hand;
But they don't do much work, for they know
what they miss
While the world thinks them happy—well,
few understand.
A man who is lonely must shoulder his load
And smile as he travels the thorn-beset road.

SONGS OF A CITY.

There are others, of course, with a happier
fate.

Do they know what they've gained? Well,
I doubt it, my friend.

'Tis the man who was robbed of his early
loved mate

Who thinks of the blessings the gods some-
times send;

'Tis he who could speak of love's value and
cost,

He knows it too well—for the poor devil lost!

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE CITY'S SENTINEL.

Superbly grand, this sentry lifts its head
To where the four great breezes roam on
 high
And guard the star-specked highways of
the sky.

Ablaze with light, like home of genii,
Its slender shaft shoots upward, while the
 Night
Her sad face veils, despairing, at the sight.

The sunshine bathes its face, impassive,
 white;
The ghostly mists—lost souls that yearn
 for rest—
Glide slowly past, beneath its stately crest.

Stand long, stand strong, thou sentry of the
 West,
And be a mute incentive to each Son
To crown the work by Pioneer begun.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE WINDS OF THE WESTLANDS.

Over the breasts of the mountains,
 Into the dew-sparkling bowers,
Sporting with brooks and with fountains,
 Kissing the wondering flowers,
Wander the winds of the Westlands.

Forth from the heaven's high porches
 Burst they along with the morning;
Dimming the stars' feeble torches,
 Passing with boisterous warning
Down through the night's vanquished
 shadows.

Over each weary-faced city
 Groaning aloud in its anguish,
Pause they in infinite pity,
 Seeing such multitudes languish,
Crushed by the hand of oppression.

Men are no longer as brothers,
 Each has to fight or go under;
Pale are the beautiful mothers,

SONGS OF A CITY.

Hearing life's terrible thunder;
White are the cheeks of the children.

Loud is the master's harsh laughter
E'en while the skies o'er him darken;
Who cares for what may come after?
Who to the message will hearken
Borne by the winds of the heavens?

Never the winds cease their chanting,
Echoed by canyons and passes;
There where the hillsides are slanting
Write they a name on the grasses,
Luring the footsteps of angels.

Poets and prophets and sages
Tell of the message they carry;
"Upward and on through the ages
Passes the race, nor may tarry
E'en till the last sees the sunlight.

"E'en till all sorrow is driven
Out of the world's dusty places;
E'en till the darkness is riven,
Veiling the light in the faces
Even of God's chosen people."

SONGS OF A CITY.

Those are the words (will you listen?)
Sung by the winds as they wander
Over the grass blades that glisten
Ever so brightly up yonder,
Up on those beautiful hillsides.

Eve time! A cattle bell ringing;
Bees rise from honey-sweet clover;
Winds at the portal are singing
Deeds of the day time now over,
Asking God's grace for the night time.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE MIST.

The mist is San Francisco's veil
With which she hides her eyes
At even-tide, when sunbeams fall,
From yon enamored skies.

It leaves the grey Pacific's breast
And decks her till the day,
White-limbed and ruddy-cheeked, hastes
West
And drives the night away.

Lyrical Intermezzo.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

Within a garden bright
A rosebud lifts her head;
At morn, at noon, at night,
The wind is thither led.

It creeps across the sky,
It nestles by its rose;
It seeks near her to die—
Its passion no one knows.

Thy lot is sad, O Wind!
Though true thy love may be,
Each rose is too unkind
To heed thy love or thee.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LIFE.

A bridgeless river rolls between
Two banks that are as one;—
Two lovers decked in fairest green
And wooed by wind and sun.

Across the gulf by night and day
Their loving looks they dart;
The river still pursues its way
And keeps them both apart.

SONGS OF A CITY.

SONG.

I once was young, alas,
Nor knew the worth of love;
I saw Fame slowly pass
Along the heights above;
Love called to me to stay,
Fame beckoned me away—
“Were I but old!” I thought.

The days are shorter now,
Fame still is far ahead;
No laurels deck my brow,
Gray hairs are there instead.
Alone I tread Life’s plain,
Love will not come again—
“Were I but young!” I sigh.
“Were I but young!”

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

O happy winds that kiss the flowers,
O laughing winds, that woo the sea,
Ye little care though pass the hours—
Ye live and love eternally.

But we poor phantoms, resting never,
Whose flights are measured by the day,
Live once, love once, and hunger ever,
Then sleep a sleep that lasts alway.

SONGS OF A CITY.

A LITTLE SONG.

Go, little song, and greet my love
Who lives in the peaceful south;
Join with the scented winds that touch—
Oh, envied winds!—her mouth.
Ask her to turn her eyes in pity
To one who waits in the restless city,
Thinking of her.

Go, little song, and greet my love,
And bid her come to me;
Tell her a lover's voice is good—
As good as the voice of the sea.
Tell her the stars that shine above her
Weep when they see her weary lover
Grieving for her.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

Saddest singer in the grove
Is the dove;
Yet it has a treasure trove
In its love.
Blows the wind from east or west,
Peace there is within the nest
With its mate of downy breast,
Never old.

To an image in my heart
I must sing;
None will ever know the smart
Longings bring.
Sweet may be the poet's lays,
Maidens know too well what pays;
Love stands begging nowadays
In the cold.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE SEA AND THE SHIPS.

The sad sea loves each mighty ship
That nestles on its breast,
And seeks to hold it there for aye—
It longs to be caressed.

The mighty ships have iron hearts,
They speed toward the shore;
They leave the weary waves behind
That mourn for evermore.

SONGS OF A CITY.

DAYBURST.

A mass of roofs that gleam with silvery light,
A far-off noise as though a giant wakes;
One single star—a lonely anchorite
That keeps still watch until the young
day breaks.

A pregnant cloud, with golden glory filled,
Which rises slowly to the purpled rim
And then swells over, while the world is
thrilled
To hear the music of the first bird's hymn.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

The sunbeams woo the grayest dawn;
The saddest song must cease;
To every bird, howe'er forlorn,
There comes a time of peace.

Each dew-kissed flow'ret finds a bee,
The lonely winds find rest;
Each child can seek a mother's knee,
Each soul a Father's breast.

Beside each thorn a rosebud lies,
The ripples woo the sands,
The heart alone forever sighs,
And no one understands.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

A victim I to one disease
That mocks my doctor's art;
No gentle fancies flock to please
A melancholy heart.

The bees will shun the blossoms raped
By truant winds or rain;
Shall Love abide in shrines dark-draped,
And sing his songs in vain?

For Love is young, not patient he;
Though blind, he loves the light.
He fears the place where grief may be
As sunflowers fear the night.

SONGS OF A CITY.

A QUESTION ANSWERED.

"Why this ceaseless striving?
Is it any good—
Plotting and conniving,
Nothing understood?

"Days and nights will follow
Till Time's web be skeined;
Happiness and Sorrow
Both are pre-ordained!"

"Granted; but soul fires
Still may purify!
Take away desires
What but brute am I?

"Win or lose, strive ever;
Time ordained brings rest;
God's great plan fails never.
Fear not; He knows best."

SONGS OF A CITY.

WOMAN'S EYES.

Eyes of blue are fanciful,
Like the summer's sky;
Eyes of brown are eyes of love,
Trustful till they die.

Eyes of grey are wise and pure, —
Fearless, never shrink;
Eyes of black are eloquent,
But they seldom think.

Therefore choose the gray or brown,
And thou soon wilt find
All the wealth of heart and soul
Smouldering behind.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE SUM OF LIFE.

We laugh till noon.
Then shadows creep
Across our path;
And, none too soon,
We fall asleep.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE DEW.

In Paradise an angel stands,
Of loving heart and tender mien;
Her face is covered by her hands,
For she is weeping.

The Earth below is steeped in gloom,
The grass looks sordid, old and dry;
The world rolls onward to its doom,
And all is sleeping.

The tears o'erflow those sacred eyes
And speed to earth their pilgrim way;
O'er every bough and bush soon lies
The dew of heaven.

The poet greets the trembling dawn
With outstretched arms and fervent prayer;
He sees the drooping world re-born—
Its sins forgiven.

SONGS OF A CITY.

A SONG OF PEACE.

Peace to our little home,
Love and companionship;
Others abroad may roam—
Here will we rest.

Duties done, here we meet;
Sacred this home to us.
(Thank God for you, my sweet,)—
Peace be our guest!

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

I know that thou art beautiful,
I know that thou art pure.
Of this—that thou art merciful,
Ah, Love, let me be sure.

For mercy doth become a saint,
And thou can'st well forgive
A sinner who for this did sin:
That he through thee might live.

SONGS OF A CITY.

AN EASTER LYRIC.

(1897.)

Ah, Phyllis, best of all dear girls,
Lest I should fall from grace,
I pray thee, hide those tempting curls
And veil that saintly face
When I shall sit by thy dear side
In church at holy Easter-tide.

So long I worship thee alone,
By morn, and noon, and night,
That I must haste me and atone
If I would gain the Light.
So turn that angel face away
From me a while on Easter Day.

Yet stay, it matters not to me
What happens after death,
If I but gain one glance from thee
Or feel thy fragrant breath
Upon my cheek. Oh, do not scorn
My hungry eyes on Easter Morn !

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE MESSENGERS.

To the battle-field of Life,
Where the strongest heart grows
frightened
By the thunder-din and strife,
Come two messengers enlightened.

First the new-born, in whose eyes
May be seen the dreamy quiver
Of the light of Paradise,
Like a greeting from the Giver.

When the fight is almost done,
And the after-life is dawning,
Comes old Death, and all is won—
For his eyes reveal the morning.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE CRY OF THE MANY.

All ye who love and who are blessed
With that which gives men peace,
Whose weary brows have been caressed
By loving hands;
Bethink ye once of those poor men
Who wander all alone
Through Life's thick brakes and gloomy fen
And shifting sands.

Pray once for those whose eyes ne'er met
A loved one's purest gaze,
Whose weighted hearts could ne'er forget
Their chains close-riven;
Whose feet ne'er trod that golden stair
Which ends at heaven's gate;
Then we some day may meet her there—
Beloved, forgiven!

SONGS OF A CITY.

LOVE AND DEATH.

Love is youthful, Love is gay,
 Love is often proud;
Love oft comes and goes away
 Like a golden cloud.
Love oft cuts the truest heart
 Like a two-edged knife;
Love is bought and sold in mart—
 Love is Life!

Death is older, Death is pure,
 Death is Love grown wise;
Death is calm, of purpose sure;
 Death has moistened eyes.
Death is robed in vestments white,
 Death bids Sorrow cease;
Death is God's eternal Light—
 Death is Peace!

SONGS OF A CITY.

A WOMAN'S WAY.

Why comes he not? The hour is late,
He ne'er forgot before;
I sit in silence and await
His step outside my door.

I thought for once I would surprise
That truant love of mine;
But all untouched the supper lies,
Unope'd the sparkling wine.

The violets I bought for him
Are wilting in despair;
My blushing rose—his foolish whim—
Is burning in my hair.

Men are so strange; they seldom think
Of things as women do;
They love as they may eat or drink,
Forgetting all when through.

SONGS OF A CITY.

We women venture much, it seems,
On what is merely chance;
And many find the blade that gleams
Behind a lover's glance.

Can he be false? I still can feel
His kiss. I hear the vow
He made that night when he did steal
The love he turns from now.

Some say there is a God above,
And some that it is Fate;
But hush! his step—his knock! "O Love,
'Twas wrong to come so late."

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE DEATH OF THE BELOVED.

Of all long days this day has been the
longest,

And saddest, too, of days, O God, how sad!
Hell's hungry flames this day have burned
the strongest

Within my heart that never yet was glad.
No songbirds' notes, nor winds that sing
'neath heaven,

Nor flowers' scents, nor yonder moaning
shore,
The deepening gloom about my soul have
riven

Wherein true rest shall enter nevermore.

For on this day, when yonder sun is setting,
A fairer sun and sweeter sets for me;
No chance is there for my poor heart forget-
ting

In scented dusk the things it hoped would
be.
The calm old stars will light the weary flow-
ers

SONGS OF A CITY.

Until the dawn strides forth from heaven's
gates;
But ne'er a star will rise to light the hours
For one who stands in loneliness and
waits.

Love, pray me strength until shall dawn that
morrow

When by thy side I seek eternal grace,
Made pure and sweet by life's divinest sor-
row—

The ceaseless longing for a loved one's face.
And though the gloom my weary path may
darken,

And tears make dim the glory to mine eyes,
Be thou, love, near, that I to thee may
hearken

And learn the songs they sing in Paradise.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

Where are now those years departed
When the children, simple-hearted,
 Beautified life's desert plain?
Gone are they, with love-faint flowers
 Wooed at night by summer showers;
 Seek them not—thy quest is vain.

Loud is now the Wheel's stern grinding,
Dark is gloom, yet Light too blinding;
Grove we ever, never finding—
Children, flowers, all have left us.

All have left us! Lone and weary
Climb we up the hillsides dreary
 Where the fairies once did reign.
Oh, return, ye years departed,
Flowers, children simple-hearted,
 Bring us rest and soothe our pain!

SONGS OF A CITY.

LYRIC.

At the gate of thy heart, O Beloved, I stand,
For my sins to atone.
I have naught but my love and my life in my
hand,
They are thine—thine alone.

All the birds of the woods take delight in my
pain,
E'en the stars smile above;
And the boisterous winds think my efforts
are vain
To secure thy fond love.

Spare my tears and my shame! O Beloved,
I wait
To atone for each sin.
I am weary and cold; open thou the small
gate—
O my Love, let me in!

SONGS OF A CITY.

APPRECIATION.

Oft unanswered are the words,
Singer, of our songs;
Oft unnoticed sing the birds—
They, too, have their wrongs.
Wave-crash, wind-sigh, summer-shower,
Star-lamp, bee-drone, dew on flower,
Tints in sky at sunset hour—
Few can these things see.

Be not, therefore, sad of heart,
Singer, but sing on;
Simple singing soothes life's smart—
Wages comes anon.
Not for naught those star-lamps swinging;
Some one hears the love-birds singing;
What if God hears songs go ringing
Through Eternity?

SONGS OF A CITY.

SHOULD AUGHT BEFALL.

Should aught befall, dear love of mine,
To keep us twain apart,
'T will be no fault of mine or thine,
Who have one common heart.
A simple creed is ours, indeed—
"I love my love; my love I need."

But there is one (I shun his name)
Who lurketh ever near,
A foe to love, a foe to fame,
And him, dear love, I fear.
I fear lest he may beckon me
Because my eyes are turned to thee.

But should I go I know not where,
Of this, dear love, be sure,
I'll wait thy spirit's coming there
Where all things shall endure.
Be sure I loved thee best of all,
And ever will—let aught befall.

Songs of a City

PART II

SONGS OF A CITY.

KEITH AT THE EASEL.

That's how I like to work! See, there is nothing of plan
Here in this colored mass of meaningless greens and browns,
Taken from off the palette, placed haphazard upon
A shingle that smells of the forest, a canvas that might have been
Beloved of the full-souled wind that blows o'er the laughing sea.
Yet if you wait awhile—even as I must wait.
Until the finger of God touches my wandering brush—
Then from this chaos of color something with meaning will come,
Which, with a final stroke, broadens to clearness, and soon
Lies a completed picture there on the breast of my board.

SONGS OF A CITY.

"Splotches of green," you say. Well, there's
a splotch of brown,
And a splotch of white at the back and a
splotch of summer blue,
And a dark line up and down, and another
one here, and there,
And a scrape with a knife as well, and then
with the brush again.
And—eh? Oh, you see it now; the redwoods
looming up
And the foliage all around, and the good
light falling through
And kissing the humble ground that moth-
ered those mighty trees?

Well, it is only a sketch, a hint that a Hand
within
Guided those aimless strokes, those
"splotches" of blue and green,
Leaving to me the task of working along His
lines
To finish, as man best may, the picture that
He began.
That's where the secret lies: "To finish as
man best may

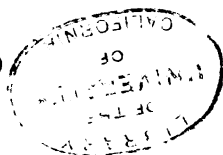
SONGS OF A CITY.

The picture that He began"; to feel, as the
color comes
To the redwood tree or the sky, or the tiniest
bloom beneath,
As aeons and aeons ago the Artist Himself
did feel
When He clothed the stalwart trees in the
colors best suited them;
To be, in an humble way, a heavenly artisan,
And fashion, on canvas or board, the pictures
He makes and hangs
For us to wonder at in the galleries of the
world.

Look at the picture now, less indistinct, you
see,
Values all understood, chaos become a plan.
A plan unto you or me, but is it a plan to the
babe
Or the poor dumb brute of the field that
wanders amid it all?
"Why do I ask?" you say. Just for the less
son taught.

SONGS OF A CITY.

Look at the world outside, look at its pain
and sin,
Look at the tangled paths and the hopelessness
of life;
The efforts that are uncrowned, the ideals
unattained,
Look at our grief and joy—"splotches" of
black and white.
We, who are children still, cannot quite understand
How it is all a part in the planning of Him
who guides
Fate in its daily course, e'en as His Hand my
brush.
Yet it is ever so, and the painting will tell its
tale—
"Splotches" of green and brown changing to
what you see—
That the picture which God began will always
come clear at last,
On canvas or there in life, if man but works
and waits.



SONGS OF A CITY.

FERRYBOAT FANCIES.

The sun above, and the girl I love,
A breeze and a rippled bay;
A merry crowd and never a cloud
To shadow our joy to-day.

Again and again some old refrain
Is played by the cabin band;
The youngsters chaff and the maidens laugh
And the elders understand.

The seagulls glide by the ferryboat's side,
Or dive for a dainty thrown
By a poor old maid whose gloves are frayed
And who is all alone.

I wonder why Love passed her by?
Or has she loved, and now
The singing hears in far-off spheres
Of one with aureoled brow?

SONGS OF A CITY.

(2)

The sky and the bay are sad to-day,
The heart of the ferryboat throbs,
As though aware of tears in the air
And the violin's low sobs.

The hills look chill and the bay is still,
As still as a ghostly lake;
With piping cry the sea-gulls fly—
Winged mourners—in our wake.

A maiden sighs and a baby cries,
And one old fellow sleeps;
A youth in love just gnaws his glove,
A weeded woman weeps.

I sit apart, with a heavy heart,
And think of days now dead;
Of a last caress and a fragrant tress
From my beloved's head.

SONGS OF A CITY.

(3)

Before I came the gulls were there—
The white-winged sisters who have been
The vestals of the sun-blessed air
Since skies were blue and waters green.

And when I rest beneath the grass
They, still, will follow, day by day,
The throbbing boats that ever pass
And speed the eager on their way.

SONGS OF A CITY.

(4)

Beneath the purple skies
My San Francisco lies,
 A myriad flaming jewels on her breast;
The night, sad-souled, enorme,
Enswathes her royal form—
 The waters croon her liquidly to rest.

The while I haste to her
The drowsy breezes stir
 The fitful flash of jewels, till the mist
Creeps up from off the sea
And seeks to hide from me
 The limbs a happy Titan may have kissed.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE OLD MAN'S SONG.

(Mountain View.)

Dig me a grave, my sturdy man,
Thou warden of the West;
For I have run my life's short span
And now I fain would rest.

Above yon grove of shady trees
My resting place must be;
Where I may feel the sun and breeze,
Where I may hear the sea;

Where I may hear the raindrops fall
And every wild-bird sing,
And feel the glory of it all,
Nor miss one single thing.

For everything to me was good;
No day that did not prove
Divinity in humanhood
Made clear by human love.

Now shadows close about my head—
My rest is fairly won;
And there is quiet with the dead—
For those whose tasks are done.

SONGS OF A CITY.



THE HIGHER PRAISE.

(At the grave of Richard Realf, Lone
Mountain.)

With curling lip I sought that chosen place
Wherein, at last, earth's toilers rest, nor
hear

The fretful call of songbird, or the drear
Dull boom of waves against the sad shore's
face.

The hopeless fog had ceased its spectral race
In search of peace, which restless man
holds dear

And seldom finds. The air was cool and
clear;

The flowers slept and night came on apace.

Beneath a mound of simple green there lay
A man who sang, yet lacks the deathless bay,
And lies unheeded, though his art was
great;

But while I mused the wind from o'er the sea
With scented breath crept gently up to me
And whispered low: "Unloved of all—
save fate!"

SONGS OF A CITY.

AN ODE TO THE SONS OF CALIFORNIA

O stalwart sons of the stalwart men whose
names are the Westland's glory,
Whose mighty thews won the land you
own and bequeathed it you forever;
Whose deeds are writ for the race to read in
the world's immortal story;
Whose pallid brows from their deathless
wreaths no mortal hands shall sever!
O stalwart sons of a race of kings,
Accept the song an old man sings.

There is no land in the whole wide world like
this great land of ours;
Beloved of men with a child's true love for
the gifts so nobly given;
Beloved of God, who hath put His seals in
the shapes of radiant flowers
Upon each inch of our fruitful soil to make
ye sure of heaven.
O stalwart sons of a mighty land,
What hand so wise as a Father's hand?

SONGS OF A CITY.

The Eastland shrinks 'neath the humid heat;
the snow and the ice assail her;
Her face is lashed by the tempest's whip
and scarred by the lightning's finger;
Nor threats nor prayers of weary men
against their fate avail her—
The Eastland treads a gloomy path where-
on few sunbeams linger.
O stalwart sons, the Eastland bears
A heavy cross up life's steep stairs!

Our land is free from the storm's rough
breath, the hurricane gods are sleep-
ing;
Our seasons pass with a rhythmic step
through the chain the days are weav-
ing,
Our songbirds sing with a saucy air—their
mates in the East are weeping;
Our land is loved by the laughing sun—
the snow-decked East is grieving.
O stalwart sons of the mighty West,
Which land, think you, of these, is best?

SONGS OF A CITY.

The sapphire sea on the land's soft marge
its white-souled spray is flinging;

“What strand so fair as the Western
strand?” the laughing waves are crying.

The deep-sea birds of their Western loves in
hoarser tones are singing,

As, homeward bound on the wind's great
wings, they fly when day is dying.

O stalwart sons, the birds should know,
For o'er the whole wide world they go.

Our air is sweet with the smell of herbs and
fresh with the breath of grasses;

Our fields are rich with a wealth of grain
lured forth by the sun's caresses;

The young winds dance on our mountain tops
and ring in our gloomy passes—

They ride at will on the laughing waves or
hide in the grain's long tresses.

O stalwart sons, could the East but see
The Westland's rich fertility!

SONGS OF A CITY.

Our girls are cast in a golden mold; their
cheeks wear the kiss of morning;
Their lips are tinged with a deeper red
than tinges England's roses;
They grasp the truth of the great new life
which everywhere is dawning;
The love of God—aye, the love of man—
within their hearts reposes.
O stalwart sons, our girls are good—
The type of truest womanhood.

Ye know the worth of the gift full well—this
gift of the Father's giving—
And well ye know how your sires toiled for
that which ye inherit;
And well ye know that without true work no
life is worth the living,
And in God's judgment deeds well done
Death's crown alone shall merit.
O stalwart sons, ye will not shirk
From finishing your sire's work?

SONGS OF A CITY.

Then up and do while the day is yours. Work
steadily and surely
To make the Banner of the Bear defy those
stars above you;
Have faith in self, in State, in God. So men
shall reap securely
In days to come great benefits, and all the
world will love you.
O stalwart sons, Love's all that's worth
Our striving for upon this earth.

SONGS OF A CITY.

CALIFORNIA.

The world shall press toward her. From the
 sea

 Awakened Asia shall demand her hand;
While eager Europe, in the years to be,
 Shall seek alliance with this favored land.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LOTTA'S FOUNTAIN.

Violets and roses, golden daffodils,
Mignonette and pansies. Is this winter,
say?

Lo, the sky is smiling and a fragrance fills
All the air about me this December day.

Car bells loudly ringing, newsboys here and
there;

Black-eyed flower vendors: "Buy, fair
lady, buy."

Only in my bosom is it winter here,
Only mine the sorrow that can never die.

SONGS OF A CITY.

MY WEST! MY WEST!

The face of the world turns West, for the
Westland is great and good;
The trail of the world leads West, for the
Westland is young and free;
In the Westland one is assured of the oneness
of humanhood,
The majesty vested in man; one learns
from the singing sea
The songs that so subtly tell of the wonderful
glory of God!

The West is a royal bride, more royal than
sceptered queen;
The fairest of all fair lands the Maker of
All hath made.
The West is the holy spot where even to-day
are seen
On meadow and field and hill, in valley and
gorge and glade,
The signs that reveal to men the Presence
that is divine.

SONGS OF A CITY.

Red Egypt was great of yore, a queen whose
mysterious head
Was turned to the silent sands that lay
like an awful deep
Around and beyond her walls. But Egypt,
the Still, is dead;
Her towers are turned to dust and the
mighty Pharaohs sleep,
And no one is there to wake the spirit that
died with them.

And Greece? She is now a dream; a glory
that blazed and passed
Across the astonished dark; a smile that
forsook too soon
The face of the care-worn world. Such
beauty was not to last,
And so, when her hour struck, she died in
a splendid swoon
And now she is laurel-crowned, but dead as
the Past is dead.

The splendor of India, too, is passing; for
Famine's breath
Has tarnished her crown of gold; and the
cries of a million poor

SONGS OF A CITY.

Who crouch in the winged shade and mutter
for night and death

Have driven her spirit forth from temples
that still endure

Like shells on the hot-lipped shore, and moan
of their emptiness.

And Italy hears no more the trumpets that
stirred to Fame

Her sons in the shadowed Past; nor Venice,
nor even Rome,

Nor Florence, nor Padua, awaken in us the
same

Sweet feeling of reverence that made them
the queenly home

Of all that was great and good when the
world was in its prime.

No more go the white-winged ships from the
storied land of Spain

To conquer a virgin world; for Spain is a
royal ghost

Whose spirit may moan and mourn on the
breast of the heaving main,

SONGS OF A CITY.

But never again may sing. For lo! she
hath joined the host
Of those that have gone before, twice doomed
and forever damned.

The hour of each has struck. But now in the
West there is

The rival of each of these—great Cali-
fornia!
Whose praises are daily sung by jubilant
symphonies—

Yea, the four winds of God are singing
their praise of her,
Of her who is Queen of all, whose glory shall
never wane.

She sits by her brooding hills and gazes
across the sea

As gazes that One of Greece across the
abyss of Time;

Secure as the distant stars from rebellions
that yet may be,

She thinks of her sons, and laughs; and her
laughter is as the chime
Of silvery bells that hint the companionship
of God.

SONGS OF A CITY.

Who knows what her eyes may see in the
heart of the purple haze?

Who knows what her ears may hear in the
silences of the night?

Who knows what hath been inscribed on the
tablets of the days

That bide in the womb of Time, till touched
by the kiss of light,

They wake from their ancient sleep and issue
from out the dark?

She knows, but she tells us not; she sees, and
is satisfied.

And so through the golden days she sits on
her flowered throne

And watches the treasure brought on the
shoulders of the tide

From peoples across the seas, whose labors
enrich her own;

Full sure that the years will bring great
blessings along with them.

Turn Westward, embittered world, to the
love of the amethyst sea!

Turn Westward, ye haggard men, to this
aureoled chatelaine!

SONGS OF A CITY.

The moon and her maiden stars, who wander
so patiently
Along the empurpled lanes, have envied
the sun, and fain
Would brood o'er her splendid form did
morning not drive them on.

Turn Westward, and ye shall be (though
weary ye were and sad)
Made one with the sea and sun, and the
breezes that woo the hills;
And ye shall rejoice with men, who labor, yet
who are glad,
Because they are free themselves—as free
as the air that fills
The chalice that must be sweet to the lips
of the most high God.

SONGS OF A CITY.

THE CHINESE.

By twos and threes
From out the mist
The weird Chinese
Glide forth to tryst.

Yellow and drawn are their passionless faces,
Dull are their eyes;
Blue are the lips of each mouth, closely
shaven,
Stranger to sighs.
Each has a pigtail that dangles behind,
Each lets his shirt-tail fly loose in the wind;
And, added to that,
Every Chinaman's hat
Is wide in the brim, in the crown very low.
Other hats seldom go—
Not with John.

Work is now over for them. They have
served us
Better than Japs—
Cooking, and washing, and waiting, and
dusting,
Stealing, perhaps.
John is a good one at gravies and pies,

SONGS OF A CITY.

And other creations from shortcake to lies;
And if he provides
For his own folk besides
Perhaps he's a pull with his favorite Joss--
"It's nobody's loss,"
Thinketh John.

They look pretty solemn. And yet, if you
followed
Slumming to-night,
Then you might see how those eyes, strangely
leaden,
Smoulder with light
Born of strange fancies that opium gives,
When, for an hour, the Chinaman lives;
And the cares of the day
Are driven away
By visions of almond-eyed maidens who smile
For a very short while
On poor John.

By twos and threes
Behind the mist
The weird Chinese
Glide forth to tryst.

SONGS OF A CITY.

LUNA'S.

Have you never been feasted by Luna, who
dwelt near the Church of Assisi
In the Mexican quarter of 'Frisco? Ah,
well, you have missed it, I tell you;
For he was a *chef*, if there was one, in all the
delectable city
That lies by the mighty Pacific, expectant,
and dreaming of Asia.

How oft in the fickle-starred nineties I sat at
his snow-lined table
With an equally careless companion, and
only a dollar between us;
And let the red *vino de Napa* encarmine a
mood that was sable
And the *Chili con carne* (*cañamba!*) lend
warmth to a heart that was frozen.

O dream-stirring dishes of Luna! What lake
on the boiling equator
As hot as his *sopa galena*? His *entrees*, and
that which came after,

SONGS OF A CITY.

Were hotter than fire and brimstone. Full
often I felt like a crater
And longed for a bite of the Arctic to cool
the disturbance inside me.

How well one remembers the mother, an aged
and stately señora,
Who sat at his family table, and smiled at
us all as we entered!
How well one remembers the waiter, the
wall-eyed, who said: "Have some
more-a?"
"More vino, or breado, or salta?" The
rogue was a native Vermonter!

Two hours we suffered in silence the tortures
reserved for the sinner;
The waiter would leer while we smouldered,
and swear that he came from Madrida.
Then coffee came on, with it Luna, who hoped
we had had a good dinner,
And couldn't he stand us a something, just
one, say a small *maraschino*?

SONGS OF A CITY.

How often he brought to us cocktails, of
mescal, infernal, but cheering:

“*Con mio, señores, con mio; Saludo Ustedes,
señores!*”

How often he ope'd the cigar box, or
thirty-year cognac, declaring

He loved a poor artist (good Luna!), and
wouldn't we read him a poem?

We told him of pictures unpainted, of poems
too high for expression,

The while on the coals of ambition he blew,
and predicted our fortune;

And wouldn't we have just another, just one,
say *Chartreuse*, for digression,

Before we stepped forth on the sidewalks
and climbed the long hills to our lodg-
ing?

Ah, well, they are over for ever, those days
when the gilt was untarnished,

Those days when we lived in a garret, and
dined when our pockets permitted;

SONGS OF A CITY.

But now we are older and sadder, and daily
becoming more varnished,
And Chateau Lafitte fails to please us like
wine that was five cents a bottle.

We pick at our food like a raven, and croak
of a coming to-morrow,
And though we have money, we save it,
and dream of the joys of the nineties;
For when a lad's young he is happy, but when
he grows old he must sorrow
And pay for the dinners he mastered, and
the *mescal* he swallowed, at Luna's.

SONGS OF A CITY.

A YEAR'S CHANGE.

So blue the still Pacific,
So blue the stiller skies,
So blue the waving irises—
So blue her eyes!

But yesteryear we lingered
Upon those hills at dawn
And saw the sea preparing
To greet the morn.

And now the skies are frowning,
No more the flowers wave;
The very sea is sighing—
My heart's a grave.

SONGS OF A CITY.

SAN FRANCISCO.

(From the Hills.)

'Mid sedges tall this summer day I lie
And hear the waves fall softly on the sand.
So pure the air, it seems with outstretched
hand

One e'en might touch that veil we call the
sky.

From o'er the sea the wind with fretful sigh
Betakes its way across the fertile land,
Whose flaunting poppies form a golden
band,

And dance before the sun's voluptuous eye.

Beyond the dunes a city, young but proud,
Upreats its front in sunshine or through
cloud

And ever lures new children to her breast;
A man-made city; one whose voice shall
sound

In days to come life's truths the world
around,

And wake earth's leaders from their gold-
drugged rest.

SONGS OF A CITY.

MUSIC IN THE PARK.

It seems so good, so very good, to be
A part of all this joyousness to-day.
The air is full of subtle melody—
Rossini, Liszt, and Wagner. One might
say
They sat with us, or we were guests of theirs
And heard the holy music of the spheres.

Such air! Such skies! Such fragrance! What
delight
Like this to lie outstretched upon the green
And bathe one's soul in music, while the
white,
Stray clouds creep onward, and a golden
sheen
Enswathes the world, upon whose peaceful
breast
The very shade lies, idle-winged, at rest.

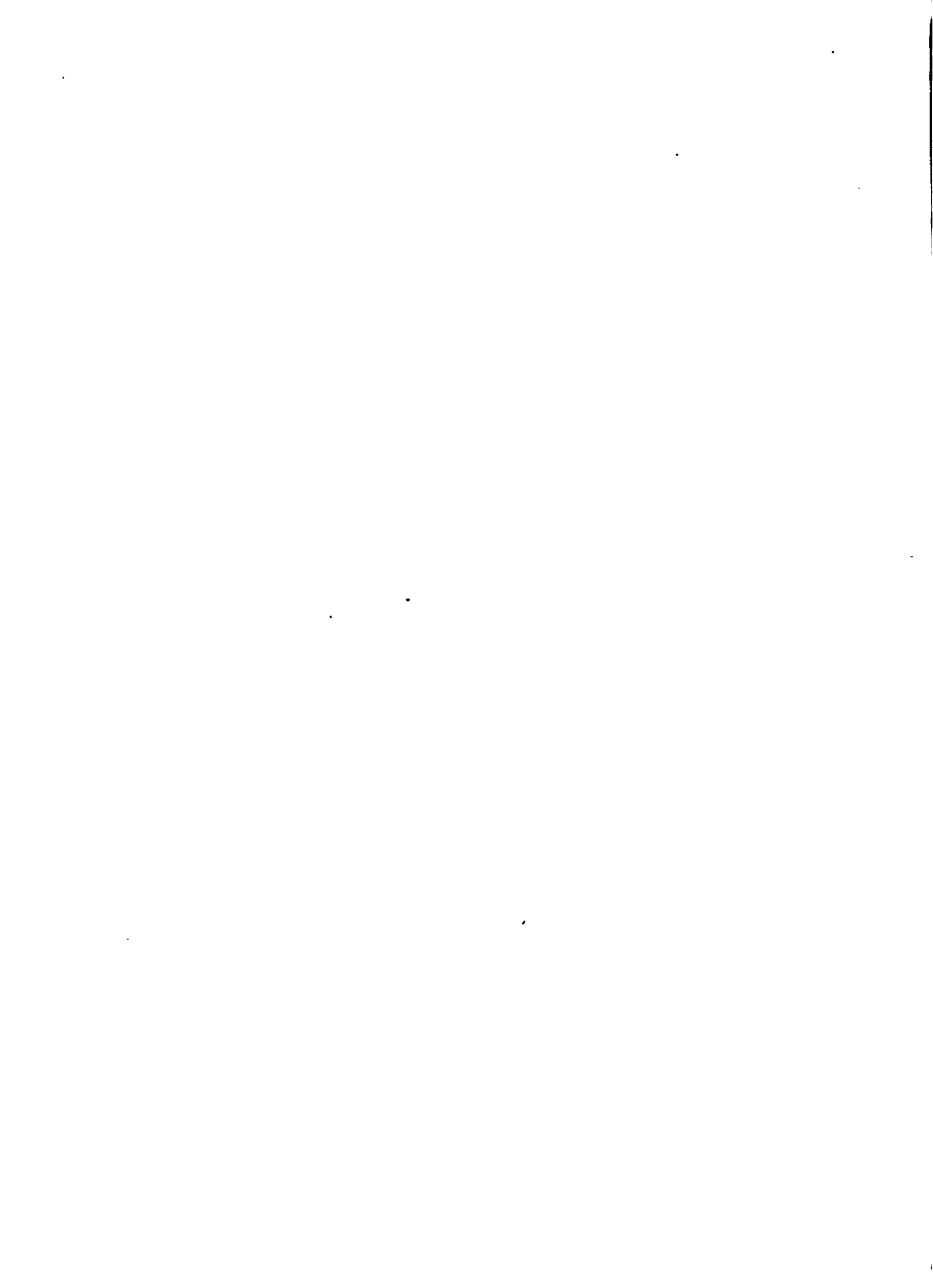
SONGS OF A CITY.

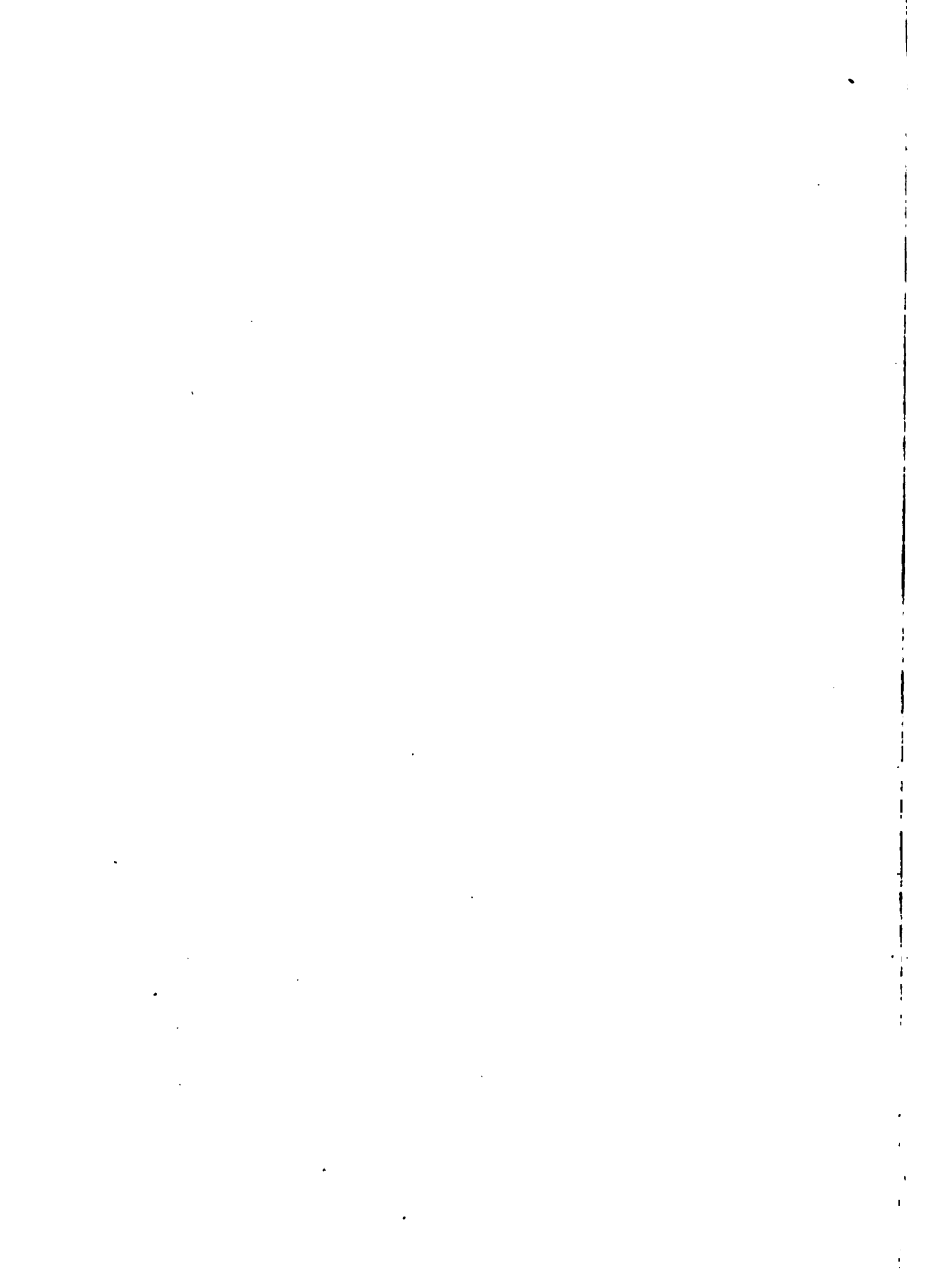
THE PROMISE OF LIFE.

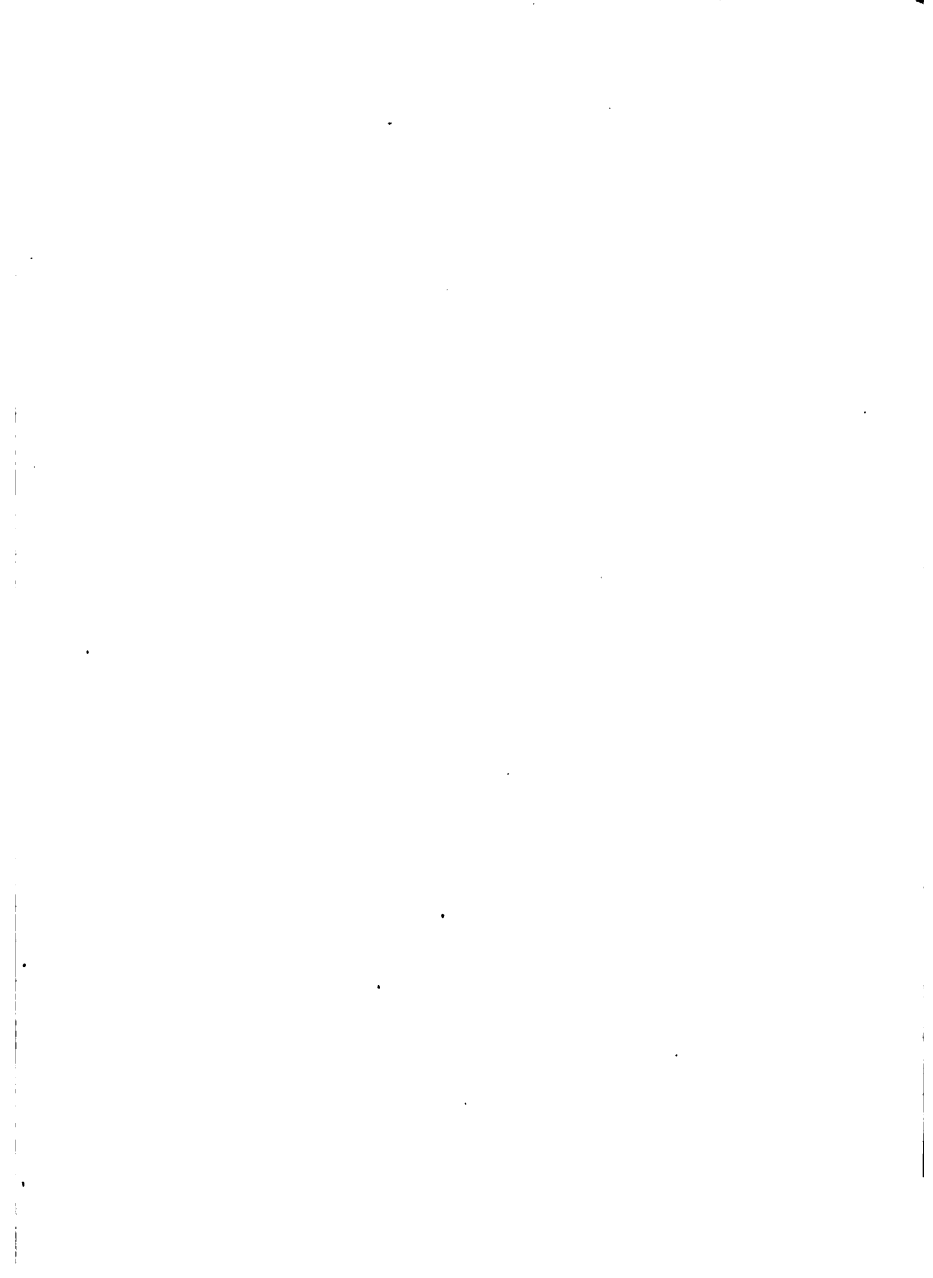
A setting sun, a purple sea;
One shaft of golden light
That tints the hill-tops, and, to me,
Hints dawn-burst after night.

Fear not, my soul, the gray of death,
The still, uncharted main;
The Light will find thee, and the breath
Of God be thine again.









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